

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

1. (original) A payback system for making payback to a product user or a middleman when a service is received by using a product distributed by a product manufacturer or the middleman, characterized by:

storage means for storing use results of the service received by the product user by using the product; and

calculation means for calculating a payback value or payback values to one or both of the product user and the middleman based on said storage means.

2. (original) The payback system as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that:  
the product is an information-processing product; and  
the service is provided by means of the information-processing product.

3. (original) A payback method for making payback to a product user or a middleman when a service is received by using a product distributed by a product manufacturer or the middleman, characterized by the steps of:

storing use results of the service received by the product user by using the product; and

calculating a payback value or payback values to one or both of the product user and the middleman based on the stored use results.

4. (original) A payback system in which a customer receives a product directly or via a middleman from a product provider or a product and service provider, and receives a service from a service provider or the product and service provider by using the product, characterized by:

storage means for storing use results of the service received by the customer by using the product; and

determination means for determining a payback value or payback values of the product to one or both of the customer and the middleman.

5. (original) The payback system as claimed in claim 4, characterized in that:  
the product is an information-processing product; and  
the service is provided by means of the information-processing product.

6. (original) A network service payback system for making payback to a distributor of an information-processing product having a network connection function, the information-processing product being distributed to a customer so that a network service is provided for payment to the customer by means of the information-processing product, the network service payback system characterized by:

distribution channel storage means for storing the distributor of the information-processing product, the distributor being correlated with information-processing product identification information for identifying the information-processing product;

information-processing product information storage means for storing customer identification information for identifying the customer and the information-processing product identification information registered with a network service provider by the customer, the customer identification information being correlated with the information-processing product identification information; and

payback calculation means for calculating a payback value to be paid to the distributor by the network service provider based on the customer identification information stored in the information-processing product information storage means so as to be correlated with the information-processing product identification information stored in the distribution channel storage means and on use result information of the network service, the use result information being separately collected and correlated with the customer identification information.

7. (original) The network service payback system as claimed in claim 6, characterized in that the use result information is a charge for use of the network service by the customer.

8. (original) The network service payback system as claimed in claim 6, characterized in that the use result information is a period of registration of the customer with the network service.

9. (original) A computer-readable recording medium recorded with a payback operation program for making payback to a distributor of an information-processing product having a network connection function, the information-processing product being distributed to a customer so that a network service is provided for payment to the customer by means of the information-processing product, the payback operation program causing a computer to function as:

distribution channel storage means for storing the distributor of the information-processing product, the distributor being correlated with information-processing product identification information for identifying the information-processing product;

information-processing product information storage means for storing customer identification information for identifying the customer and the information-processing product identification information registered with a network service provider by the customer, the customer identification information being correlated with the information-processing product identification information; and

payback calculation means for calculating a payback value to be paid to the distributor by the network service provider based on the customer identification information stored in the information-processing product information storage means so as to be correlated with the information-processing product identification information stored in the distribution channel storage means and on use result information of the network service, the use result information being separately collected and correlated with the customer identification information.

10. (original) A payback system for making payback to a product user or a middleman when a service is received by using a product distributed by a product manufacturer or the middleman, characterized by:

a storage device storing use results of the service received by the product user by using the product; and

a calculation device calculating a payback value or payback values to one or both of the product user and the middleman based on said storage device.

11. (original) The payback system as claimed in claim 10, characterized in that:  
the product is an information-processing product; and  
the service is provided by means of the information-processing product.

12. (original) A payback system in which a customer receives a product directly or via a middleman from a product provider or a product and service provider, and receives a service from a service provider or the product and service provider by using the product, characterized by:

a storage device storing use results of the service received by the customer by using the product; and

a determination device determining a payback value or payback values of the product to one or both of the customer and the middleman.

13. (original) The payback system as claimed in claim 12, characterized in that:  
the product is an information-processing product; and  
the service is provided by means of the information-processing product.

14. (original) A network service payback system for making payback to a distributor of an information-processing product having a network connection function, the information-processing product being distributed to a customer so that a network service is provided for payment to the customer by means of the information-processing product, the network service payback system characterized by:

a distribution channel storage device storing the distributor of the information-processing product, the distributor being correlated with information-processing product identification information for identifying the information-processing product;

an information-processing product information storage device storing customer identification information for identifying the customer and the information-processing product identification information registered with a network service provider by the customer, the customer identification information being correlated with the information-processing product identification information; and

a payback calculation device calculating a payback value to be paid to the distributor by the network service provider based on the customer identification information stored in the information-processing product information storage device so as to be correlated with the information-processing product identification information stored in the distribution channel storage device and on use result information of the network service, the use result information being separately collected and correlated with the customer identification information.

15. (original) The network service payback system as claimed in claim 14, characterized in that the use result information is a charge for use of the network service by the customer.

16. (original) The network service payback system as claimed in claim 14, characterized in that the use result information is a period of registration of the customer with the network service.